3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

487 After spending a cold and uncomfortable night at Khafa Gumbaz (the name means "Domes of Wrath") we emerged on to the Pamirs by the windy gate of Bulunkul and camped at a little mud fort south of the lake amid typical 704 Pamir scenery. The garrison of this lonely post consisted of an out-at-elbows lieutenant and three men, all married to Kirghiz women. One of the soldiers interested me very much. A hawk-nosed, black-avised, alert little man in an enormous astrakhan hat appeared at the door of our *aq-oi* with an accordion in his hands, stood to attention smartly and entered without further ado. He told me he was a Russian Kirghiz from Tokmak in Semirechia, whence he had come three years before; he looked to me more like a Noghai or "Tartar," but might have been a Tartar-Kirghiz half-breed. He was very friendly and insisted on treating us to a concert on his "garmonie" (the Russian form of the word "harmonium" which they use for accordion). On that wheezy old instrument he played various long and unmelodious tunes in our tiny *aq-oi*. It was a painful performance, but we hated to hurt his feelings and were most appreciative; he was so very obviously a spy from across the frontier, and in so lonely and desolate a spot we could well understand his joy at finding at last a job of work to do.

487 During the next four days we wandered unhurriedly across the Lake District of the Chinese Pamirs, halting a day close to the north shore of the Little Qara Kul and another at Subashi. Here the Qungur and Muz Tagh Ata massifs stood round us in a vast amphitheatre, their dazzling domes and ridges of ice reflected exquisitely in the sapphire waters of the lakes. It was a pleasant time; the weather was perfect and the Kirghiz charming; sport was good, the lakes and marshes teeming with geese, ducks, teal and snipe. Near the Qara Kul we were met by our old friend Nadir Beg, the tall and jovial "British Watchman in Sarikol," with a regular cortège of Kirghiz and the inevitable wayside tea-drinking. Earlier in the same day we had an interesting *rencontre*. A party of •788 about twenty travel-stained and weather-beaten old men clad in ragged sheepskin cloaks and hats came riding northwards over the pamir. They proved to be Turki pilgrims returning from Mecca, the remnants of a party of fifty or more who had left Kashgar in April for the Holy Cities. They had had a terrible time, they said, on the high passes of the Hindu Kush between Tashqurghan and Chitral, and several of the

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

weaker pilgrims had been lost in the snow, thereby acquiring as much merit as if they had reached Mecca. They had nothing but praise for the authorities in Chitral, at Peshawar, on the Indian railways and at Bombay, where the official "Protector of Pilgrims" had put them on a specially-chartered steamer for Jeddah. In the Hijaz their troubles had recommenced, heat and disease claiming more victims than the snows of the Hindu Kush, besides which they had been held up for weeks by Bedouin robbers between Mecca and Medina. Returning by the same route, the survivors had found little or no snow on the passes and had had a comparatively easy journey.

Another interesting meeting was with a fine-looking old Kirghiz in a rich cloak and green turban at Subashi. This man, Khokan Beg, by name, told me that in Tsarist times he had been a great man in the Russian Pamirs, no less than the Mingbashi (Headman of a Thousand Households) of Great Qara Kul. Then a Pharaoh had arisen who knew him not, and he had migrated to Chinese territory with his wives and his sons and his daughters and flocks and his herds and everything that was his. He also told me that nine or ten years before he had entertained "a great British Consul and his wife from Kashgar," after whom he inquired; these can have been no other than General Sir Percy and Miss Ella Sykes, who visited the Russian Pamirs in 1915.

The Pamirs are well known to be the habitat of *Ovis Poli*, one of the three largest kinds of wild sheep in the world, the other two being *O. Ammon*, of Tibet, and *O. Karelini*, of the Tien Shan. Nowadays, however, good heads are very rare on the Chinese side of the frontier, especially in the more accessible regions. I gathered at Subashi, which used at one time to be a good centre, that most of the Kirghiz nowadays have guns of a sort and that they shoot down the sheep indiscriminately for food. The only corner of Chinese territory in which *Ovis Poli* are still to be found in some numbers is in the Qara Zak and neighbouring valleys, two or three marches north-west of Bulunkul. A pair of horns was brought to me which had come from the Russian side; evidently it was expected that I would want to take a trophy home with me, and would pay a good price. The measurements were 56 inches in length and 15¼ girth.

Even if there had been a chance of a stalk, as I had hoped, I should have had some difficulty in working it in, for thanks

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S N 563 183 709 431 (651) religious teachings. According to the religious code it is obligatory for a man of means to contribute a certain amount of his wealth to public charity. Next to worship, this is the most important duty in Moslem society. The original idea of helping the poor and needy evolved into a tax (ten per cent on agricultural produce and two and one-half per cent on animals) collected from all believers for religious and public welfare purposes. Another form of alms, the sadaqa, is a voluntary offering. Public welfare supported by the tax, after the collector's fee is deducted, includes freeing slaves, assistance to persons who became indebted for good reason, making holy war to defend the people and the faith, and aiding needy travelers.

S N 563 396 735 During the month of Ramadan (fasting) donations and offerings are collected for public welfare purposes. The amount is not fixed, and the act of giving is voluntary. A sense of public responsibility is strong among these people. Not only do they give regular allowances to the needy in their own communities, but they help needy outsiders of their own faith.

S N 563 788 554 The Hajjis, or those who have completed the pilgrimage to Mecca, are highly respected in the Moslem community, and wear special badges to mark their distinction. The opportunity to journey to Mecca is the dream of all Moslems.

c. Virtue

S N 563 577 779 It is important for the individual to cultivate the true concept of peace and submission. The concept of peace involves such ideals as mutual cooperation and aid among mankind, mutual understanding among religions and peaceful co-existence of nations to achieve world brotherhood. The concept of submission means to submit oneself wholly to Allah and follow his teachings, sacrificing self-interest for the promotion of happiness for mankind.

S N 563 515 Personal cleanliness, both internal and external, is most important. Cleanliness in eating habits and personal hygiene is thought to develop a clean soul, free of evil thoughts and immoral conduct.

d. Racial superiority

S N 563 186 The Chinese Moslems regard themselves as a special group, superior to their Chinese neighbors. As students and officials, their attitude toward respect for the emperor and for Confucius has, in the past, been one of compromise. Compelled by law to conform, they excused themselves on the grounds that they did so outwardly but not in their hearts. The old and the new sects of Chinese Moslems, although bitterly hostile toward each other and at times engaged in armed conflict, on the whole present a united front toward the Chinese and the rest of the world. S N (798)

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4. Customs

S N a. Religious rites

According to religious rules, the Moslems are supposed to 563 pray five times daily (sunrise, noon, afternoon, sunset and 779 midnight), facing in the direction of Mecca. Few of the Chinese 782 Moslems besides the Mullahs and Ahungs adhere strictly, but pray only once or twice a day. To be valid, prayers should be performed in the mosque, but those who find it impossible to go to the mosques may pray wherever they are. The call to prayer S N (adhan) is made by the Ahung, or religious leader, and the be- [793] lievers join in saying the adhan. Daily noon prayer is popular, and the Friday service is the most fully attended.

Public worship cannot be performed by fewer than four per- S N sons. Women may not attend the mosques where the men pray. [562] In some places, women have their own mosques and women Ahung to direct the prayers and Friday services. Women always worship as individuals and not as a congregation, though there may be a number of women gathered together.

S N The Moslems must be clean when they attend any religious 563 ceremony. Hands and face must be washed, and bathing before 779 worship is common. For this reason all mosques of importance 782 have bathing places annexed. The Moslem becomes unclean by 783 touching such objects as dishes containing pork or any meat not killed according to ritual, pigs, dogs, wine or excrement.

S N The thirty-day fast of Ramadan is fairly strictly observed. 563 During this period one is not to eat between sunrise and sunset, 796 and such things as smoking, drinking and sexual contact are also 785 forbidden. In many places, a messenger goes about the Moslem 779 quarters calling out the times for observing or breaking the fast, [203] lest someone oversleep or fail to prepare and eat the necessary food before daybreak. The end of the fast is celebrated by a feast.

The aged, ill, insane, travelers, women who are pregnant, menstruating or nursing, persons doing heavy labor or whose lives are in danger are excused from the fast, but if or when they are able they must make up for it. The purpose of the fast is to help the believers maintain pure and pious lives. Fasting is considered meritorious at other times too, except on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

S N b. Naming

Within seven days after the birth of a child, he must be given 563 a Koranic name, or Ching-ming (religious name). For this oc- 553 casion a feast is prepared, and the poor are fed. If the child is a 852 male and the family wealthy enough, two sheep are killed for the occasion. If the child is a girl, only one sheep is killed. To S N arrive at the name, the father holds the child with its face ● [788] toward Mecca and repeats a prayer in one ear of the child, then

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S N 563 852 [553] [788] the other. Then he turns over any seven pages of the Koran, and from the seventh word of the seventh line of the seventh page, takes the name. When a male child reaches his seventh birthday he is circumcised and taught to worship.

c. Marriage

S N 563 582 [791] The marriage customs of the Chinese Moslems, with the exception of the wedding ceremony itself, are the same as those of the Chinese. The bridegroom is accompanied by his father to the bride's home, where the ceremony is performed. The Ahung reads from the Koran, in a manner similar to that of the Christian marriage service, then asks the couple whether they agree to the union.

N *563 585 In Koko Nor (Chinghai) the bride is customarily covered with a piece of red cloth after the ceremony, then lifted by her uncle or brother into the sedan chair and sent to the groom's home. Upon arriving there she is lifted out by her relatives. She wears a veil on the first day and hides in her chamber while relatives and guests sing, dance and feast in celebration. On the second day she receives guests, bowing to each one. Meanwhile the guests present their gifts and congratulations.

S N 563 582 585 [783] Exogamic marriage is permissable to the extent that a man may marry a Han Chinese woman, who is supposed by marriage to become a Moslem. Before such a marriage the girl must submit to elaborate purification ceremonies to cleanse her from the defilement of her own home. The Ahung officiates at the wedding and the Chinese custom of worshiping heaven and earth is not performed.

d. Funeral and burial

S N 563 764 The funeral customs of the Chinese Moslems are more distinct from those of the Chinese. The dead body is washed ceremoniously by religious leaders from the mosque, who take the garments of the deceased for themselves. The body is then swathed in white bandages, each limb being bandaged separately. Correct performance of this rite is very important. Well-to-do people sprinkle incense on the cloth used for bandages. The wealthy also place large quantities of musk and camphor in the grave. The corpse is placed upon a board under which are the bands necessary for lowering it into the grave, then covered with a bottomless coffin for the trip to the cemetery. The coffin is never interred. The corpse is placed in the grave with head to the north, feet to the south and face toward Mecca.

When the deceased is a woman, only members of the family may look on when the coffin is removed, and only blood relatives, preferably sons, may descend into the grave to arrange the body.

S N 563 763 769 There are elaborate instructions concerning death. Rituals include the recitation of prayers as death approaches, the

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any should oversleep and fail to eat the necessary food before daybreak.

The regular practice of Zakat is practically unknown to the Chinese Moslem community. Only during the month of Ramadan, when charity is extended to the poor and donations are given to the ahung are alms given in a form resembling Zakat. There is no fixed amount given and the act itself is purely voluntary. The only form of sadaqa (voluntary alms) given is the sadaqa el-fitr given in the three days of Id el Fitr (the Moslem New Year). These offerings can be made in cash or in goods.

SN 795 788

Particularly among the Chinese Moslems of the Northwest the practice of pilgrimage to Mecca was observed. The Hajjis, or those who completed their pilgrimage to Mecca, were highly respected in their communities. Pilgrimage has decreased considerably in the last years. The Hajj organized by the China Islamic Society in 1952 did not reach Mecca; they went as far as Pakistan and returned to Peking, for reasons that were not specified.

SN 795 796

Id el-Fitr, the New Year, is the best observed of the different Moslem holidays. It occurs during the first three days of the tenth month. Special services are held in the different Moslem communities, and great feasts are given to celebrate the occasion.

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In general the Chinese Moslems do abstain from pork and wine as their religion commands. They will not eat meat that has not been killed in the approved Moslem fashion. Many of the merchants, carters and others who travel carry their own utensils, and often, where there are no Moslem communities, carry their own food so as to avoid food that is prohibited by their religion.

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The influence of the general Chinese beliefs on the Moslems has been noted by many, particularly by D'Ollone. Ancestor worship is the core of the non-Moslem Chinese belief. It is not restricted to domestic worship but extends to religious devotion to the graves of the ancestors, which are designed to assure the peace of the deceased and are a scene of devotion every anniversary. The Moslems of the Northwest have been so influenced by these traditions that, in the secrecy of their homes, most of them burn incense in front of the ancestors' tablets. In evidence of this custom, D'Ollone brought back two vases which served the purpose of ancestor worship. Both of these vases belonged to Chinese Moslems, and had Moslem religious inscriptions in Arabic. The practice of pilgrimage to the well kept tombs of the ancestors is also found among the Chinese Moslems of Kansu. Some of the bigger tombs are quite elaborate and include, besides the monuments, a mosque, school halls and lodging places.

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